included in the successive Annual Plans depending up on the overall priority and the availability of funds. It is not possible to indicate any time frame for availability of funds for this purpose.

Impact of Global Bid by Petronet LNG on Indian Shipping Companies

574. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the global bids invited by Petronet LNG for transportation of 7.5 million tonnes of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) into India has effectively shut the doors on Indian Shipping Companies;

(b) whether Government are considering a written protest against the bids; and

(c) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. An advertisement of Petronet LNG Limited in the form of global notification for pre-qualification of shipowners and operators for transportation of LNG had appeared in the newspapers dated 8.2.2000. Prima-facie, none of the Indian shipping companies appear to be satisfying the conditions stipulated therein.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Nevertheless, as the process of inviting bids for pre-qualification of shipowners and operators for LNG transportation has commenced, steps have been initiated to facilitate participation of Indian Shipping in an active manner as far as LNG transportation is concerned.

National Highways in Maharashtra

575. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of National Highways in Maharashtra region-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to construct such highways for the benefit of Adivasis;